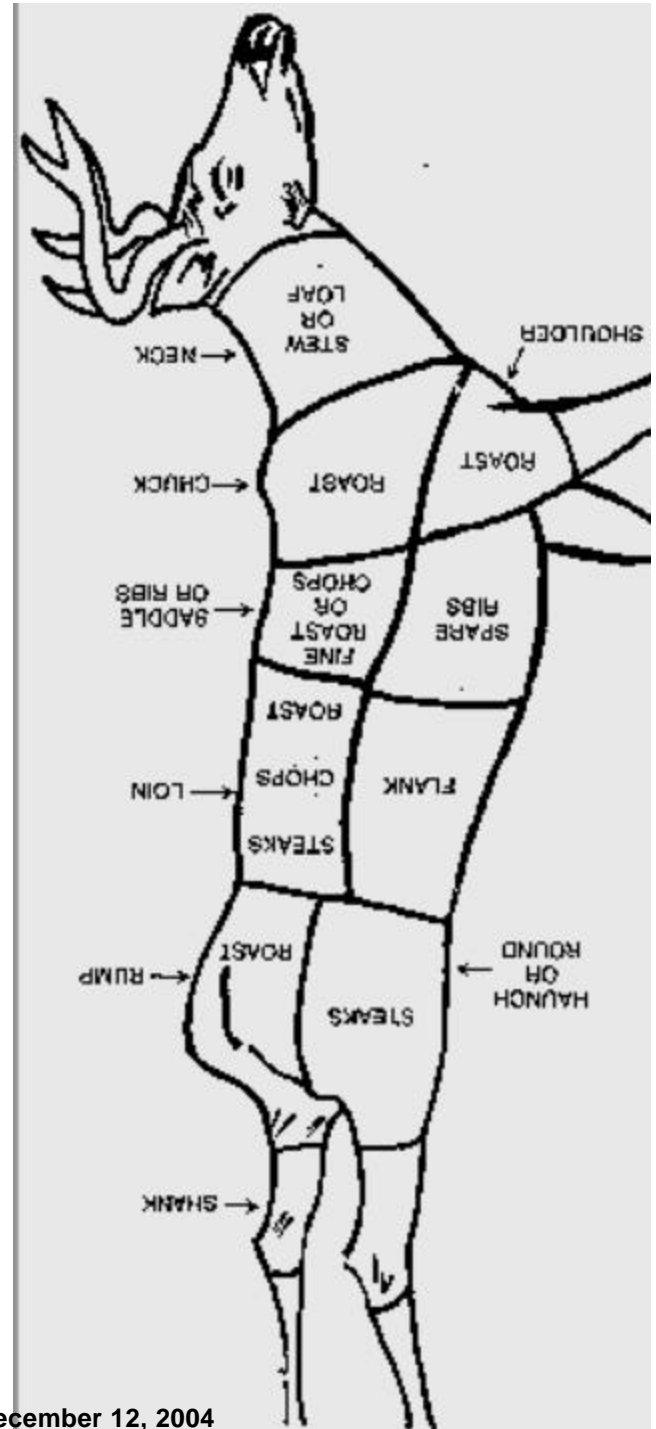


DEER PROCESSING



So you got lucky and bagged a deer! Before the heading for the woods, along with hunting gear, you brought along a few things to clean the deer. I recommend a half dozen of those 3 liter pop bottles full of water, a few sharp knives one for filleting the other for skinning, another for heaver cutting, a sharpening steel or stone. Bring one of those plastic cutting boards 24 x 15 inches, plenty of quart baggies, game shears. I have literally cleaned and skinned the whole deer with my Swiss Army Knife when it's sharp. When you get to bone cutting you need something more substantial; I recommend one of those collapsible meat/bone saws; I have used a hatchet, my brush saw, even the saw in my leather man, brush nippers work on separating the lower legs. You cannot have too much stuff until you cannot get it all in the rig on the way to two woods.

Another thing hopefully is you reviewed this before you took to the woods. Unless its unusually warm (above 65 degrees) I don't recommend gutting the deer in the woods. The idea about removing the entrails is to allow the carcass to cool off as what I have read when the blood stops flowing in the deer the decay/spoiling process begins. Not all decay/spoiling is negative; if the weather permits I like for the meat to "age" before freezing, either by hanging in 50 degree temperature or in bags for up to 10 days, in the refrigerator. I know from experience that the aging process makes the meat more palatable and have read the decay process up to a limit is responsible for this.

Wild deer makes a fine meal for many people. It is important to properly handle deer immediately after the shot. How quickly the animal dressed and the meat properly cooled determines the quality of the meat. However, far too many deer are wasted or make poor quality eating because hunters do not follow the simple, field dressing rules of good meat handling after the kill.

I don't like to gut the deer in the woods for several reasons; first this brings coyotes and predators that deer don't like to your hunting site; when you open the deer up you get all kinds of

If you don't want to use fresh onion and garlic use powder which will work just as good. You should also use barbecue seasoning or taco seasoning. The main thing when cooking venison is seasoning and slow cooking. You can marinate meat in wine, onion and garlic before cooking... makes for tender.

You can take a chunk and marinate it for a couple of days and the ten cook it in the smoker for several hours 4-6. Make sure you keep water in the water pan.

Care in the kitchen.

For immediate use, store the meat in the refrigerator and use within two to three days. Keep raw meat separated from other foods to prevent cross-contamination. Spices and marinades may be used to cover up the "gamey" flavor, which is mainly due to the fat they contain. Marinades also tenderize and enhance the flavor of venison. The marinade should include a high acid liquid like vinegar or wine to soften the muscle fibers. Always marinate in the refrigerator. We usually marinate the meat in salt brine over night after removing anything white. Then use the wine, garlic, salt overnight before cooking.

From Carmels kitchen:

Fried Back Strap

Slice 1/4 " Thick. Season onion, garlic powder, pepper. Put an egg in some milk. Put black pepper in the flour. Dip in milk in the flour in the milk in the flour then in 1/4" hot oil in skillet. Make some gravy and have a feast.

Other meat.

Clean up and remove any visible fat. Place in crock pot on or oven proof pan. Cut big onion in chunks. 1 tablespoon chopped garlic, 4 bay leaves, 2 bullion (beef) cubes, 1 cup water. Place meat in pot or crock add seasoning. Cover pot and let it get hot then turn down and let cook for 5 hours. In oven, cover pan tightly with foil. Bake at 325 degrees for 3 hours. Remove bay leaves then put barbecue sauce or add potatoes and carrots and cook till vegetables are done.

trash in the deer meat that has to be thrown away; lastly, to minimize the distribution of blood on your clothes, the four wheeler, you pickup, etc. If you are a ways from home more clothes aren't readily available.

Cutting the deer's throat is recommended if the deer needs to bleed; in my experienced most of the time the deer is bleed out when you arrive at its location. Cutting the throat contributes to the reasons above for delaying gutting the deer. However, there are times when its evident the deer needs help in dying and then you step on the antlers with one foot, the front legs with the other and insert the knife just above the brisket inward toward the back of the neck. It will be evident when you reach the artery as the blood will come fast. If the deer is alert be careful, the hooves are like knives and can inflict injury's you wished you didn't have.

Here you are with the dead deer, what next? In the early days when I was poor I carted the deer to the road or camp by making a pack out of the animal. At the hock (be careful to avoid the scent glands close by, notice of the inside of his back "knees." there will be a patch of hair growing there that is longer than the rest of the hair surrounding it. This is the deer's scent glands, which give off a very strong offensive odor. If you get this scent on your hands or knife the meat you touch will most likely not be eatable, so be careful.) cut the skin between the large leader and the leg. Next on the front leg carefully cut the knee joint and skin the big leader on the back of the leg to a point halfway between the hoof and the separated knee making something that resembles a stick with a rope tied to the middle of it. Insert this into the hock where you cut the skin and you have just make a pack out of the deer. To get the deer on your back lay down and run your arms through the front leg to back leg arrangement on each side... roll over on your hands and knees and then grip the tree in front of you and stand up. The deer's tail is in the back of you neck and the head is trailing on the ground and you are glad you didn't open the stomach cavity.

Now you can bring the antlered head in front where you have attached some orange surveying tape to keep some eager hunter from taking a shot. I have carried some pretty good sized deer a ways in the manner. If the ground is soft its difficult.

Getting the deer into a four wheeler can be challenging. I have found you do the same cut at the hock and run a rope through the opening and tie the legs together... then attaché the other end of the rope some where forward on the four wheeler where the legs are on the rack... then you can grab the head and flip the rest of the deer on the rack... tying the antlers to the rack where it is snugged up where it cannot roll off on the way to camp.

If not far (½ hour) from checking in do so then gut when back in camp... if weather is above 65 degrees gut the deer first usually easier to skin un-gutted deer.

Once at camp I carry a dog collar and attach to the deer's neck, if you thought to bring a come-along then you can hoist the deer up until the neck is in front of you and you cut the hide around the neck and begin pulling the skin downward... once you have it over the shoulders you bring the skin down to the knee on each leg and using your bone saw or brush nippers cut the leg bone above the knee. Raise the deer and continue pulling the skin down where you can use the brush nippers to cut the tail and then down the legs to the knee where you again cut the leg bone leaving the lower leg with the hide. I have found if you reach inside the hide, the hair side and grip the hide you can pull it off readily, the warm deer is easy the cool deer is more difficult Now get your 5 gallon bucket and where the ribs end on the lower rig cage make a small incision where you place your finger in the opening and carefully cut all the way to the deer's lowest part between the legs. You are careful not to disturb any of the internal organs as the contents of the paunch with the knife. If you puncher anything this will not only make

the rest of your deer cleaning smelly it will contaminate the meat and make it harder to eat. Dump the contents of the stomach cavity into the bucket... cut the diaphragm and remove the heart, lungs, etc. Take your bone saw or heavy knife and split the sternum to the shoulders. On the lower end carefully cut around the butt hole and pull this from the inside until all is in the bucket. Take your bottles of water and wash the inside of the deer. Wash your hands often from the bottle of water laying on the four wheeler rack with the lid barely open to allow a trickle of water for washing.

Now you have a deer without the skin hanging. I set up my cutting board on the back of the four wheeler or something where you can work standing up and begin filleting the meat from the hind quarters... take the filet knife on the ham bone and follow the bone upward continue to cut the meat and place it in the zip lock bags... if the deer is still warm leave the bags open at the top to allow the meat to cool. Once the hams are clean of meat you make an incision along both sides of the back bone down to the ribs to remove the Back Strap... usually you can then take your fingers and peel the Back strap from the ribs... placing in the zip lock bags. Turn the deer around and remove the inside back strap from the back of the stomach cavity and bag it. The rest of the cleaning is similar... cutting meat and bagging it. When you come to the wound where the deer was shot any meat that is blood shot is not kept... if the meat is bloody you can wash before you place in the zip lock. If its very red and bloody discard it. I have kept the ribs but there is not enough meat here to make it worth while... I usually leave them attached to the neck and head for disposal. The front shoulders are filleted in a similar fashion as the hind quarters... look and you will see a ridge bone in the middle of the shoulder... use filet knife and cut up the ridge and then filet from the shoulder bone... at some point you can remove the shoulder and get to the rest of the meat.